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ABSTRACT

This document contains staff-development standards developed by over 50 educators. The standards are organized into three categories: context, process, and content. The section on context addresses the organization, system, or culture in which the new learning will be implemented. Process refers to the "how" of staff development and includes descriptions of the ways in which new knowledge and skills can be acquired. Some examples of process standards include group development, follow up and support, and evaluation. The last category, content, refers to the actual skills and knowledge effective middle-level educators need to possess or acquire through staff development. Examples of this category include research-based instructional strategies, pre-adolescent development, high expectations, and curriculum. Each of the standards described in the text contains several parts: a succinct statement of the staff-development expectation; the theory and research that validates the significance of the standard and expands its understanding; a real-life application of the standard; the results that can be expected if the standard is consistently applied; a means for individuals and groups to consider the implications of the standard for their setting; and sources for citations in the rationale section. An appendix includes a self-assessment and planning tool. (RJM)

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STUDY GUIDE

# NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S

# STANDARDS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

## MIDDLE LEVEL EDITION

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# NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S

# STANDARDS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

## MIDDLE LEVEL EDITION

Second Edition

Price: NSDC Members – $12.00 Nonmembers – $15.00

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# Overview

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), a non-profit association of approximately 8,500 educators, is deeply committed to ensuring success for all students through the application of high standards for professional development for everyone who affects student learning. The Council views high quality staff development programs as essential to creating schools in which all students and staff members are learners who continually improve their performance. The standards contained in this document represent the collective commitment of over 50 educators representing eight leading national education associations.

### *What Do We Mean by Staff Development?*

At one time staff development was synonymous with "sit and get" sessions in which relatively passive participants were "made aware" of the latest ideas regarding teaching and learning from so-called "experts." Today, you will see as you study these standards, staff development not only includes high-quality ongoing training programs with intensive follow up and support, but also other growth-promoting processes such as study groups, action research, and peer coaching, to name a few.

In addition, staff development is no longer viewed as something that is only necessary for teachers. We now recognize that everyone who affects student learning, from the board of education, central office administrators, principals and teachers, to the classified/support staff and parents, must continually improve their knowledge and skills in order to ensure student learning. Likewise, we now understand that staff development is not the exclusive responsibility of someone given the title of "staff developer;" rather it is the responsibility of superintendents, central office administrators, principals, and teachers, among others.

### *How Have We Organized the Standards?*

The standards are organized into three categories: context, process, and content.

- *Context* addresses the organization, system, or culture in which the new learnings will be implemented. Some contexts are more supportive to improvement than others.
- *Process* refers to the "how" of staff development; it describes the means for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Some examples of process standards include: group development, follow up and support, and evaluation.
- *Content* refers to the actual skills and knowledge effective middle level educators need to possess or acquire through staff development. Some examples of content include: research-based instructional strategies, adolescent development, high expectations, and curriculum.

Context, process, and content standards must all be in place to ensure that staff development makes a difference in student learning. For example, even strong research-based content with no attention to follow up (process) or leadership support (context) will not result in improved student learning.

Each standard contains several parts.

- *The standard*: a succinct statement of the staff development expectation. It establishes the level of performance to which all organizations should aspire.
- *The rationale*: the theory and research that validates the significance of the standard and expands our understanding of it.
- *The example*: a real-life application of the standard.
- *The outcomes*: the results that can be expected if the standard is consistently applied.
- *Discussion questions*: a means for individuals and groups to consider the implications of the standard for their setting.
- *References*: sources for citations in the rationale section and other recommended sources.

# How to Use These Standards

These standards are intended to be used by schools and school districts to improve the quality of their staff development efforts so that student learning will be increased. Based on the belief that "improvement is always unfinished," these standards can be used to stimulate discussion and analysis that leads to greater staff development effectiveness no matter what the current level of performance. The standards can be used in two primary ways: by individuals seeking to better understand and implement effective staff development practices, and by groups who wish to study and implement the standards to improve the organization's staff development effectiveness.

### *Individuals*

Individual teachers, administrators, parents, university professors, or community members can study the standards and improve their general understanding of effective staff development practices. Specifically, individuals can:

- Develop a knowledge base of effective staff development by studying the complete set of standards.
- Use the standards in the development of proposals to school boards or local school councils when making recommendations for program improvement.
- Refer to the standards in the development of funding proposals.
- Use the discussion questions in the analysis of current programs to determine areas for improvement.
- Use the standards in the design and implementation of annual individual improvement plans.

### *Groups*

The most powerful application of the standards is likely to be in their use as a tool to guide groups at both the district and school levels in their analysis and strengthening of current staff development efforts.

### *School Use*

While context, process, and content are all of interest to schools, it is likely that content and process will be of particular importance.

- Use the standards as the content focus for study groups. Gather recommendations for improvement based on the recommendations of the groups.
- Refer to the discussion questions to determine strategies for improving the current school improvement plan.
- Require that recommendations for improvement made by local school councils refer to the standards.
- Determine the priority standards for the school or department and create an action plan to implement the priorities.
- Ask individual teams and departments to complete the self-assessment tool and use the results in the preparation of the school's improvement plan.
- Prepare a set of key questions to ask whenever staff development is proposed in the school.
- Present the standards at parent education meetings. Share a few standards per month with the PTA/PTO board.
- Provide incentives for teachers to implement particular standards.
- Use the standards in your state or regional accreditation process.
- Share your successes in implementing the standards with other schools.
- Use as resource material as part of a "win-win" approach to collective bargaining.

### *District Use*

- Organize a committee to analyze the context section of the standards to create plans to ensure contextual factors are in place to support staff development efforts.
- Use the standards as the ongoing basis for school board development. Two or three standards per meeting could be introduced to the school board.
- Establish a process for ensuring that the standards are applied whenever program improvements are being considered.
- Create an action plan to ensure the implementation of the standards.
- Organize a districtwide staff development committee with representatives from all departments and school levels to compare current practice against the standards and to establish a comprehensive plan for application of the standards.
- Use the document as a learning tool for districtwide study groups.
- Establish model programs that demonstrate the application of the standards in practice.
- Identify and publicize schools that are successful in the application of particular standards.
- Consider the use of technology for the learning and sharing of examples of standards that are in practice.
- Create a systemwide resource file for key articles cited in the reference sections.
- Disseminate the standards to parents and other stakeholders so they know what to expect in a quality staff development program.

### *State Department Use*

- Use the standards to guide the development of criteria for state-driven proposals as well as evaluation processes.
- Use the standards as the basis for study within the department.
- Suggest the completion of the assessment tool as part of any school-based staff development planning document.
- Ensure committees refer to the document as staff development plans are made to address state-wide reform goals.
- Suggest districts use the standards document in the development of any state-mandated district-level planning.
- Help identify systems and schools that are implementing the standards and develop demonstration sites to assist other schools.
- Use the standards to stimulate dialogue between instruction and curriculum departments at the state level.
- Ensure the state board of education is familiar with the language of the standards.
- Use the standards in any state-initiated school accreditation process.
- Assess state expectations against the standards.

# THE STANDARDS

## CONTEXT

Effective middle level staff development requires and fosters the norm of continuous improvement.

Effective middle level staff development requires strong leadership in order to obtain continuing support and to motivate all staff, school board members, parents, and the community to be advocates for continuous improvement.

Effective middle level staff development is aligned with the school's and the district's strategic plan and is funded by a line item in the budget.

Effective middle level staff development provides adequate time during the work day for staff members to learn and work together to accomplish the school's mission and goals.

Effective middle level staff development is an innovation in itself that requires study of the change process.

## PROCESS

Effective middle level staff development provides knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding organization development and systems thinking.

Effective middle level staff development is based on knowledge about human learning and development.

Effective middle level staff development provides for the three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.

Effective middle level staff development bases priorities on a careful analysis of disaggregated student data regarding goals for student learning.

Effective middle level staff development uses content that has proven value in increasing student learning and development.

Effective middle level staff development provides a framework for integrating innovations and relating those innovations to the mission of the organization.

Effective middle level staff development requires an evaluation process that is ongoing, includes multiple sources of information, and focuses on all levels of the organization.

Effective middle level staff development uses a variety of staff development approaches to accomplish the goals of improving instruction and student success.

Effective middle level staff development provides the follow up necessary to ensure improvement.

Effective middle level staff development requires staff members to learn and apply collaborative skills to conduct meetings, make shared decisions, solve problems, and work collegially.

Effective middle level staff development requires knowledge and use of the stages of group development to build effective, productive, collegial teams.

## CONTENT

Effective middle level staff development increases administrators' and teachers' understanding of how to provide school environments and instruction that are responsive to the developmental needs of young adolescents.

Effective middle level staff development facilitates the development and implementation of school and classroom-based management which maximize student learning.

Effective middle level staff development addresses diversity by providing awareness and training related to the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to ensure that an equitable and quality education is provided to all students.

Effective middle level staff development enables educators to provide challenging, developmentally-appropriate curricula that engage students in integrative ways of thinking and learning.

Effective middle level staff development prepares teachers to use research-based teaching strategies appropriate to their instructional objectives and their students.

Effective middle level staff development prepares educators to demonstrate high expectations for student learning.

Effective middle level staff development facilitates staff collaboration with and support of families for improving student performance.

Effective middle level staff development prepares teachers to use various types of performance assessment in their classrooms.

Effective middle level staff development prepares educators to combine academic student learning goals with service to the community.

Effective middle level staff development increases administrators' and teachers' ability to provide guidance and advisement to adolescents.

Effective middle level staff development increases staff's knowledge and practice of interdisciplinary team organization and instruction.

# CONTEXT

**Continuous Improvement**

**Leadership/Advocacy**

**Organizational Alignment and Support**

**Time for Learning**

**Staff Development as an Innovation**

# Continuous Improvement

NOTES

***Rationale***

The norm of continuous improvement is a belief that learning about one's work is never finished–professional development is dynamic. It is every educator's task to refine skills, inquire into practice, and construct craft knowledge while working with peers. The explosion of educational research in the last 15 years has meant that in order to become an effective educator there is much more to know and apply concerning instruction, learning, and leadership.

Effective middle level staff development requires and fosters the norm of continuous improvement.

The norm of continuous improvement also implies that staff development supports the ongoing development of new skills. Staff development cannot be confined to a few specific days in the school calendar, but must be viewed as an ongoing, job-embedded examination and development of new methods.

The norm of experimentation is a belief that effective implementation of a new technique takes time and that early trials will not be perfect. It also supports a belief that new practices should be protected and nurtured rather than evaluated. If these two norms operate in a school, staff members will constantly learn about their work.

Strategies which support ongoing development include study groups, action research groups, observation and assessment, peer coaching, training and follow up, participation on school improvement and/or curriculum writing teams, and problem-solving sessions throughout the school year.

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) found in a five-year study of educators that teachers who developed sustained and challenging learning opportunities were part of a network of professionals who addressed problems and found solutions together. These professional networks discussed new teaching materials and strategies and supported the risk taking that is involved in transforming practice.

***Example***

A middle school staff analyzes its teaching practices and decides students need to be more actively involved in the learning process. The faculty selects cooperative learning as a means to accomplish that goal. Staff members create a year-long course of study which includes several presentations on the critical components of cooperative learning and classroom demonstrations. Study groups form to learn more through reading chapters from a text, discussing implications, planning lessons together, and solving problems. Subject-area teams arrange their schedules so that pairs can co-teach new lessons and debrief what goes well and what needs to be changed. By the second semester, the teaching partners are developing materials jointly and providing peer coaching for each other. Throughout the year, teachers invite experts (knowledgeable principals, teachers, etc.) to watch their cooperative lessons and provide feedback on how well the critical attributes have been implemented. Each department develops a plan for the following year to continue its use of cooperative learning, focusing on how to develop students' interpersonal skills.

***Outcomes***

- Teachers support and initiate learning about new instructional practices and strategies.
- New instructional strategies are implemented in the classroom and shared with colleagues.
- Staff development activities are ongoing and job-embedded.

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***Discussion Questions***

- Because the norm of continuous improvement cannot be mandated, how can it be developed within a school?
- What implications does the norm of continuous improvement have for staff development? For administrators? For teachers? For school structures and procedures?
- What group and interpersonal skills do teachers and administrators need for the norm of continuous improvement to exist within a school?
- How does one balance the demands of accountability and the inherent risks in innovation?

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NEXT STEPS

# Leadership/Advocacy

NOTES

***Rationale***

Leadership and advocacy for continuous learning are critical to the development and maintenance of an effective school. Leadership encourages and provides staff with the incentives and resources to pursue new learnings. An ongoing and career-long staff development program should be advocated for all personnel working with middle level students. Knowledgeable and skillful principals and teachers facilitate high levels of learning for students. Therefore, it is important for schools to invest in administrators, teachers, and other instructional and support staff by providing purposeful, intensive staff development (Ondrovich, 1989). This investment requires that varied stakeholders in the success of middle level operations be informed about issues related to staff development as it relates to the middle level organization, curriculum, and student growth and development.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES STRONG LEADERSHIP IN ORDER TO OBTAIN CONTINUING SUPPORT AND TO MOTIVATE ALL STAFF, SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, PARENTS, AND THE COMMUNITY TO BE ADVOCATES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

***Example***

A middle school principal is committed to life-long learning for herself, staff, students, and all other stakeholders. As an advocate for staff development, she seeks to convince teachers, the school board, and parents that ongoing, meaningful staff development will lead to continuous improvement. She models her own commitment to life-long learning through her participation in a weekly study group, attendance at school-based staff development, and publication of a monthly research and best practice update for staff. The principal shares knowledge and works with everyone to build a culture that supports continuous learning. She invites others to share how effective change might best be accomplished. As an advocate for students, colleagues, and stakeholders, she fosters shared leadership and encourages creativity in bringing all available human and material resources to the school. This principal provides adequate time for learning new practices and for coaching to reinforce skills.

***Outcomes***

- Staff morale increases as a result of staff empowerment and effectiveness.
- Collaborative relationships/partnerships increase.
- Parent involvement and stakeholder support increases.
- Staff development is a visible priority of the school system.

***Discussion Questions***

- Who (what roles) needs to be an advocate for staff development and continuous improvement?
- What information do advocates need in order to be most effective?
- Through what means can advocates communicate their positions to key stakeholders?

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NOTES

# Organizational Alignment and Support

***Rationale***

The strategic plan of the district identifies the major goals and objectives. Individual school improvement goals and plans are aligned with the district's expectations. It is the responsibility of staff development to support the achievement of district and school goals by linking to new curricular, instructional, technological, and organizational initiatives and procedures. Because the alternatives to choose from are seemingly limitless, it is important that the initiatives in curriculum, instruction, and technology support one another and that there are not too many initiatives at one time (Joyce, et al., 1993).

> Effective middle level staff development is aligned with the school's and the district's strategic plan and is funded by a line item in the budget.

Effective staff development requires a deliberate evolutionary process embraced by the district's board of education and all levels of the school system. The process begins by identifying effective staff development as an objective in the district's strategic plan. By doing so, staff development is perceived as essential for achieving the purposes of the organization, is valued as an integral part of the strategic plan, and is seen as a key factor in changing the district. With this type of priority status, staff development is also given a line item in the budget. As a result, staff development is perceived by the entire district and community as a critical part of the district's quest for excellence.

Because student academic success is a generic goal of school districts all over the world, objectives are typically written for the improvement of content areas such as reading, science, and mathematics. In addition, *Turning Points* (Carnegie, 1989) advocates organizing schools in ways that are more condusive to adolescent learning, identifying appropriate curriculum, advising and mentoring students, providing transformational leadership, creating new staffing patterns, and most importantly, using staff development to refine and introduce the new knowledge and skills necessary to achieve a middle school philosophy.

***Example***

The strategic plan of a large urban school district identifies student academic success as its number one goal. One of the objectives is the transformation of middle level education. The superintendent places the transformation of middle level education on the agenda of the board of education as an action item, which includes the amount of dollars committed to the objective, the time frame for implementation, the staff development required to add new knowledge and change behaviors, and the person(s) responsible for its implementation. After approval, the plan is taken to the executive cabinet where the superintendent explains the objective's significance within the strategic plan and its alignment with state and national standards. Everyone is given the same orientation to emphasize the importance of the plan and to create a high level of understanding of the responsibility of all in the implementation of the objective. Each middle school then creates a comprehensive, written staff development action plan which illustrates the relationship between staff development and the school's vision and goals.

***Outcomes***

- A comprehensive staff development plan is in place that aligns staff development and the school's vision and goals with the district plan.
- Effective staff development is perceived as essential for achieving the purposes of the organization, is valued as an integral part of the strategic plan, and is seen as a key factor in improving student learning.
- Everyone works together to identify strategies and develop action plans consistent with the district's overall mission.

***Discussion Questions***

- How do we ensure staff development decision making is aligned with the district and school vision?
- What evidence of organizational alignment and support currently exists? What needs to be pursued?

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NEXT STEPS

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# TIME FOR LEARNING

***Rationale***

"We recommend that teachers be provided with the professional time and opportunities they need to do their jobs" (36), concludes the National Education Commission on Time and Learning in its 1994 report, *Prisoners of Time*. A fundamental lesson about school reform from the past decade is that far more time is required for staff learning and collaborative work than is currently available. Staff development days - typically for workshops - and brief meetings before, during, or after the school day when other responsibilities tug at the participants are grossly insufficient to support improvement efforts.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES ADEQUATE TIME DURING THE WORK DAY FOR STAFF MEMBERS TO LEARN AND WORK TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH THE SCHOOL'S MISSION AND GOALS.

A follow-up publication from the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, *Prisoners of Time Research: What We Know and What We Need to Know* (1994), argues that "The Commission's study of time and learning in schools clearly and consistently points to a need for more and better time for teacher learning" (39). The Commission pointed out that this time is needed for teachers to master their subjects, design learning experiences for students that result in the achievement of high academic standards, use improved assessment systems, and work with and learn from colleagues. "To lock teachers into the existing system, which defines a teacher's professional activity almost solely as the time spent in front of students in classrooms, is to guarantee failure," the report notes (39).

American Federation of Teachers President Al Shanker (1993) points out that Saturn employees spend five percent of their work time learning, for a total of 92 hours per employee per year. "Imagine what a training program like this would do for people trying to restructure their schools," Shanker wrote. "Or, put another way, imagine trying to change things as basic as the culture of the school with a couple of days of inservice training a year and some hours stolen from class preparation periods. If it takes 600 courses and 92 hours a year per employee to make a better automobile, it will take that and more to make better schools. And if we're not willing to commit ourselves to that kind of effort, we are not going to get what we want."

Hugh Price (1993), then vice president at the Rockefeller Foundation and currently President of the National Urban League, argues that an important barrier to providing time for teacher development is our uncertainty about what to do with students while teachers are away from their classrooms. For that purpose, he proposes "academically productive ways" students could spend the equivalent of one day a week away from their regular teachers that "wouldn't cost the district a bundle."

Price concludes that "...some fresh thinking about academically useful alternatives to the way students currently spend time in school may free up significant opportunities for teachers to spend their time - in the classroom and out - more productively.... Somewhere in this mix of extended learning activities may lie an answer to the puzzle of how to engage teachers in sustained professional development at comparatively little extra cost."

***Example***

A school has completed a long-range plan for improvement that is based on the belief that all students can achieve higher learning levels than previously thought. The faculty recognizes that the realization of its mission will require much more time for joint work and staff development than was previously available. Staff members also recognize that increased time will only be meaningful if the staff development is well planned and implemented in a way that truly contributes to the school's ability to achieve its goals.

The faculty forms study groups that read *Time for Reform* by Susanna Purnell and Paul Hill (1992) and "Finding Time for Collaboration" by Maryann Raywid (1993). In addition, the study groups reflect on their views regarding the role of the school and the teacher in promoting learning and consider alternative ways that students might learn from other adults, such as parents and community members. As a result, the school decides that over the next two years it will gradually increase the amount of time available for staff development to the equivalent of one day per week. This will be accomplished by adjusting the schedule to facilitate department meetings and action team meetings during the day. In addition, early releases will be scheduled monthly. Finally, students will be regrouped one morning a week for service learning opportunities that will release their regular teacher for curriculum development and staff development work.

***Outcomes***

- Over a period of two years the faculty gradually increases the amount of time available for joint learning to 20 percent (the equivalent of one day per week) of their work time without any sacrifice in terms of student learning.
- Staff development will become job-embedded.

***Discussion Questions***

- What amount of time will be required each week for staff learning and joint work if the school is to achieve its objectives for students?
- What existing time commitments (e.g., department and faculty meetings, staff development days) can be refocused to help the staff have more time for learning and planning?
- Can important student learning occur outside of school and with "teachers" other than those employed by the school system?
- What are strategies for finding new time?

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**NEXT STEPS**

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# Staff Development As an Innovation

***Rationale***

The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with the meaning of that change (Fullan, 1991). People must be able to attach personal meaning to new experiences before they can accept what the changes mean to themselves and the organization. Most innovations in schools entail changes in some aspects of educational beliefs, teaching behavior, and use of materials. Individuals must develop meaning in relation to all three. This multidimensional concept of change increases the complexity of planning and implementing effective staff development.

Effective middle level staff development is an innovation in itself that requires study of the change process.

Change through staff development is a process that evolves. One framework for managing change, the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall, 1987), is based on several interrelated principles about change and acknowledges the importance of time. The model teaches that change is a process not an event. Individuals will experience change in a variety of ways and organizations need to be prepared to deal with a variety of responses and needs. For many, high quality, on-going staff development is the innovation.

***Example***

A school faculty decides to organize all staff members into study groups consisting of three to six members. These groups are the primary vehicles for ongoing staff development for individuals as well as for building the capacity of the school for continuous change. The study groups study how to make the school better, examine the research on teaching and learning, and focus on how to help students learn more. The study groups meet weekly. Individuals have an opportunity to focus on the importance of innovations with their colleagues and to decide how to incorporate the changes in their classrooms.

***Outcomes***

- The school's staff learns about the change process, and about particular innovations.
- Elements of effective staff development are studied and linked to successful outcomes for students.
- Individuals recognize the attributes of effective staff development that impact student learning.

***Discussion Questions***

- Discuss prior experiences with implementing change.
- Is it necessary to view staff development as an innovation in this school or are its premises currently in place?

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NEXT STEPS

# PROCESS

Organization Development and Systems Thinking

The Change Progress: Individual

The Change Process: Organizational

Data-Driven Decision Making

Selecting Staff Development Content

Integration of Innovations

Evaluation of Staff Development

Models of Staff Development

Follow Up

Collaborative Skills

Group Development

# Organization Development and Systems Thinking

NOTES

***Rationale***

Dramatic changes in schools often are expected to result solely from staff development programs intended to help individual teachers and administrators do their jobs more effectively. An important lesson from the past few years, however, has been that success for all students depends upon both the learning of individual school employees and in the organization's capacity to improve itself. Sufficient understanding of organization development theory and practices and of systems thinking is essential to make informed decisions regarding middle level improvement strategies.

Effective middle level staff development provides knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding organization development and systems thinking.

While the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals are ultimately the driving forces of any improvement effort, quality expert W. Edwards Deming estimates that 85% of the barriers to improvement reside in an organization's structure and processes, not in the performance of individuals. For instance, asking teachers to hold higher expectations for students within a system that tracks students pits teachers against the organization in which they work. Organization development theory and systems thinking assert that individual learning and organizational changes must be addressed simultaneously and interdependently so that gains in one area do not cause problems in other parts of the system.

***Organization Development***

"Organizational development...is a coherent, systematically planned, sustained effort at system self-study and improvement, focusing explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms, or structures, and using concepts of behavioral sciences. The goals of OD are to improve organizational functioning and performance" (Fullan, 1991). A sub-goal of OD is to help schools achieve a sustained capacity for solving their own problems (Schmuck and Runkel, 1988).

The American Society for Training and Development (1988) makes the following distinction between staff development (which it calls human resource development or HRD) and organization development (OD). "HRD focuses on the personal growth of individuals within the organization," ASTD states, "and OD focuses on developing the structures and systems within the organization to improve organizational effectiveness."

***Systems Thinking***

Systems thinking is based on the premises that systems have identifiable, recurring patterns; that change comes from fixing systems instead of people; and that organizations need to focus on root causes and long-term consequences rather than symptoms of problems and quick fixes. Systems thinkers look for situations of "dynamic complexity" in which "...cause and effect are subtle, and where the effects of interventions over time are not obvious" (Senge, 1990). Because system thinkers understand that structure influences behavior, they look for underlying patterns and ask themselves, "Would anyone put in this situation end up behaving this way?"

Without knowledge of systems thinking, teachers and administrators are likely to suffer from "projectitis" and find that seemingly incomprehensible forces are hindering their improvement efforts. Consequently, decision makers should acquire knowledge and skills related to systemic change through training or participation in other learning experiences such as study groups (Joyce, Wolf, & Calhoun, 1993, and Fullan, 1991).

NOTES

"Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots.... Systems thinking offers a language that begins by restructuring how we think" (Senge 68-69).

***Example***

As the leadership team of a middle school studies various options for improvement, its initial review of the literature reveals that the team must examine and improve organization processes and structures as well as the performance of teachers in the classroom. The committee reads several articles about organization development and selected chapters from *The Handbook of Organization Development in Schools*, *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, and *The Fifth Discipline*. The team decides to focus attention on identifying those key factors that inhibit success for all students. Over time, they identify issues such as inappropriate grading and assessment, too many classroom interruptions, and an antiquated teacher performance evaluation system. They divide into action teams that are charged with the responsibility of establishing positive alternatives to the problems and taking steps necessary to make change.

***Outcomes***

- The school's improvement plan includes important aspects of organizational effectiveness, such as decision-making processes, communication patterns, and team functioning.
- District and school-level personnel make school improvement decisions based on a thorough understanding of systems thinking and the literature about change.

***Discussion Questions***

- What is the general knowledge of the staff and the school improvement team regarding systems thinking and organization development theory and practice? Have OD practices been used in previous improvement efforts?
- What resources (e.g., consultants, organizations) exist locally to provide assistance with organization development?
- What examples can be found of situations in which systems thinking would have increased the likelihood of the success in an improvement effort?
- What parts of the existing school and/or district culture support the ongoing learning of teachers, administrators, and other individuals who affect student success, and what barriers exist to that ongoing learning?

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# The Change Process: Individual

NOTES

***Rationale***

Professional development plans too often ignore general principles of human learning. Five guidelines regarding the process of individual change should be considered.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT IS BASED ON KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HUMAN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

1) Adult learning experiences must be based on research and proven practice. All conditions that support professional development derive from this knowledge base. Although staff developers can encourage and even require teachers and administrators to attend staff development programs, they cannot mandate meaningful participation. Motivation for growth and learning comes from an internal desire toward achieving competence and positive feelings of self worth.

2) Effective staff development fosters educators' confidence in their ability to be successful on the job. Because learning and growth start from within, adult learning is ultimately self directed. Adults who feel in charge of their own development can make significant gains despite insurmountable obstacles. These gains depend upon learners sharing their expertise and experience. Such sharing also dispels feelings of isolation.

3) Successful professional development increases both independence and collaboration. It combines independent and interdependent learning approaches to facilitate the greatest possible growth.

4) Identifying staff development outcomes is imperative. This produces clear expectations, which in turn improves results. Adults need to know the level of importance, the expected outcomes, and the rationale for recommended changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Adults are motivated by clear and measurable outcomes and ongoing support to sustain interest and ensure positive results.

5) Successful designs for learning require time, resources, and supporting structures. Change doesn't occur overnight, and recognition of the time required to institutionalize change is critical.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) provides a way of viewing the process of individual change. CBAM is based on the premises that change is a process not an event, that change is accomplished by individuals, that change is a highly personal experience, and that change involves developmental growth (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). CBAM identifies seven types of concern that individuals may have as they implement change (*see Table 1*). A variety of methodologies are described for determining an individual's stage of concern. Different types of assistance can be provided to individuals based on the stage of concern (e.g., teachers with personal concerns may benefit from discussions with others who are already successfully using the techniques, while teachers with management concerns may require classroom coaching on a particular aspect of the practice). Appropriate interventions related to an individual's stage of concern can accelerate the individual's effective application of innovations.

NOTES

*Table 1*

**C B A M**

| Stages of Concern | | Expressions of Concern | Intervention Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Refocusing | I have some ideas about ways to make it work even better. | Respect and encourage interest |
| 5 | Collaboration | I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing. | Team planning |
| 4 | Consequence | I want to know how my using this approach will affect my students. | Analyze student performance<br>Observer provides feedback |
| 3 | Management | I seem to be spending all my time in getting material ready. | Observe/talk with teachers who are not experiencing difficulty |
| 2 | Personal | I want to know how my using this approach will affect me. | One-on-one conversations |
| 1 | Informational | I would like to know more about it. | Awareness sessions |
| 0 | Awareness | I am not concerned about it (the innovation). | Announcements<br>Meetings |

*from CBAM Project, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas at Austin*

***Example***

A middle school is in the midst of implementing block scheduling. To determine the next steps for staff development assistance, a team of facilitators asks all staff members to write a paragraph describing challenges regarding its implementation. The responses are analyzed and sorted according to the stages of concern. The next stage of support is planned to address the variety of concerns expressed by the staff.

***Outcomes***

- Consistent attention is given to stages of concern as change is implemented.
- Learning is self directed and life experiences are tapped as resources.
- The learning climate is collaborative, informal, and respectful.
- Adults are more willing to invest in changes resulting in increased learning for children.

***Discussion Questions***

- How can the information on CBAM facilitate more successful improvement efforts?
- How do the principles of adult learning compare to the general principles of learning for students?
- How can the five principles be used to strengthen current improvement initiatives?

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# The Change Process: Organizational

NOTES

***Rationale***

The three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization, reveal the complexity of change efforts (Fullan, 1991). A key assumption is that change is a process, not an event. During the *initiation* or *readiness* phase, leaders establish a clear need to improve, address the intellectual and psychological aspects of readiness, and assist in the development of a vision and plan. In addition, underlying principles and intended outcomes are clarified.

Effective middle level staff development provides for the three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.

In the *implementation phase*, plans are put into action to achieve the intended outcomes. This is the phase in which both individuals and the organization change as a result of new learning and follow up support. Research-based strategies such as coaching, support groups, and study groups help individuals transfer the new practices to the work setting.

During *institutionalization* the new practices are integrated into the school's policies, budgets, and routines. Structures are developed to ensure initiatives are maintained even when new needs and plans arise.

Individuals have different needs during each phase and may be at different phases within the same initiative. The time frame from initiation to institutionalization for moderately complex changes is three to five years; more complex changes, such as making staff development a way of life in schools, may take even longer. Change is not a linear process, but one in which events at one phase can alter decisions made at a previous stage.

***Example***

In the spring of the school year assessment information is presented to the faculty and the site-based decision-making council. Both groups are disappointed with the student results on the state-wide reading and writing assessment. The staff reviews the discussion questions (next page) addressing the three stages of change to facilitate the development of a long-term improvement plan. As a result, the staff prepares an annual calendar that includes eight training sessions, further disaggregation of student data, dates for study group meetings, and time for joint planning of lessons. The school year begins, and the entire staff develops new knowledge and skills regarding the reading and writing process and the assessment itself. Ongoing support meetings are facilitated by the principal, and teachers meet to discuss what appears to be working and where improvements can be made. The following fall, assessment data are reported. While reading and writing have improved, mathematics problem solving has remained at the same level. The staff identifies strategies to ensure continuing improvement in reading and writing performance when attention is turned to mathematics.

***Outcomes***

- All critical phases of the change process are addressed in the planning of programs.
- School improvement outcomes are achieved.
- Improvements in schools are not lost when attention is turned to new needs and issues.

NOTES

***Discussion Questions***

Use the following questions as a guide for planning and supporting change initiatives.

Initiation and Readiness

- Is there consensus regarding the need to begin an improvement initiative?
- Are procedures in place for collecting and interpreting site-specific data for determining and prioritizing needs?
- Is there a clear, shared vision based on clearly-articulated beliefs?
- Is there at least one strong advocate for this initiative at both the district and school levels who influences decision making?
- Is there a knowledge base in place to guarantee the support necessary for research-based decision making?
- What new practices need to be adopted to achieve the school's vision and goals?
- Does the training plan include objectives related to attitude change, skill development, and knowledge acquisition?
- Are there plans to recognize and celebrate improvements and risk taking?

Implementation

- Are problem monitoring and solving strategies in place?
- Are provisions being made for development of theoretical understanding, demonstration of skills, and practice of new skills in training?
- Are structural or administrative arrangements in place to accommodate study groups or learning teams in discussing learnings and facilitating the use of new practices?
- Are participants aware of the implementation dip (things often get worse before getting better)?
- Is the principal's role clearly defined?
- Are district-level support services available?
- Are expectations for change communicated and monitored?
- Is the impact on students monitored?

Institutionalization

- Is the change embedded in the structure of the organization through policy, budget, and procedures?
- Have links been established with other key elements of the instructional program?
- Are transitional strategies in place? Should there be changes in personnel?
- Are the costs for the ongoing use of the skill/materials/program built into the budget?
- How are new staff oriented and trained?
- Are data periodically reviewed to determine what practices need to be discarded, continued, or integrated with new practices and materials?
- Is responsibility for maintenance shared by teachers and administrators?
- Has leadership and training capability shifted to internal leaders?

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NEXT STEPS

# Data-Driven Decision Making

NOTES

***Rationale***

In order for all students to be successful in school, a careful and rigorous analysis of disaggregated data must be conducted to determine whether programs and strategies are meeting the needs of all students. Student data should be analyzed on the basis of socioeconomic level, race, and gender, among other factors. Such an analysis is critical for helping a staff recognize the need for improvement (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1990).

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT BASES PRIORITIES ON A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF DISAGGREGATED STUDENT DATA REGARDING GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING.

Lezotte and Bancroft (1985) indicate that assessment should reflect the educational outcomes the school cares most about. Most schools have standardized and/or criterion-referenced tests available. Many have and could access data on other significant figures including drop-out and attendance rates, community attitude, etc. Decisions regarding staff development should begin with an analysis of available data and be aligned with goals for student achievement; staff development content should facilitate the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the goals.

***Example***

A middle school accepts the importance of disaggregating data to determine targets for improvement. The school improvement team works through the following process to establish the targets.

1. The team receives a list of all the data that could be accessed to help in the determination of school improvement targets.
   Achievement Data - State tests, norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced tests
   Other Academic Measures - Demonstration of higher-level thinking skills, retention rate, portfolios, levels of parent involvement, disciplinary records, student profiles in all academic and extracurricular programs, drop-out rate, post secondary enrollment figures, community surveys
   Student Affective Data - Student attitude toward school, student enrollment in extracurricular programming, school vandalism costs, learning logs, student journals, attendance rates
2. The team clarifies its standards for success and the data that will be most useful in measuring them.
3. The team evaluates the current data against the standards for success. The information on each indicator is disaggregated to ensure that all subgroups are equally successful in achieving the standards.
4. The team determines the two or three areas most in need of attention and prepares action plans for improvement. The team conducts a cost/benefit analysis of the actions proposed in the action plans.
5. Each department or other organizational structure within the school studies the process implemented by the team and prepares its action plan in response to the focus areas.
6. A process for monitoring the plan is finalized. In this case, the action team chairs will discuss progress and obstacles at monthly meetings of the school improvement team.

***Outcomes***

- Staff development decisions are based on data regarding valued student outcomes.
- Recognition of the need to improve is increased.
- Accountability measures are established.

NOTES

***Discussion Questions***

- What types of data are available to the school/district?
- Are we knowledgeable enough to use the data equitably?
- How will the data be used to guide improvement in student learning?
- What kinds of data are most helpful in determining progress toward student achievement goals?

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NEXT STEPS

# Selecting Staff Development Content

NOTES

***Rationale***

Of all the staff development decisions made, probably none is more important than selecting initiatives that will pay off in terms of student learning. To justify the time, energy, and money invested, staff development should be research-based and/or proven in practice, be relevant to the site, make sense to the intended user, and be compatible with other practices that are currently or will be in use.

> Effective middle level staff development uses content that has proven value in increasing student learning and development.

An important task for the leaders of an initiative is to adapt content that was proven at another site to make it "fit" this situation. A program composed of several elements may have been proven in part at various sites, but may not have been previously synthesized as a whole, thus creating unique challenges for the leaders. Staff developers should give teachers latitude to invent local solutions that embody central values and principles (Little, 1992). This means that rather than being expected simply to implement the content of a specific staff development initiative, teachers should be given the opportunity to discover the aspects of that content that apply to their teaching context. Specific content may include subject-area knowledge, adolescent development or learning theory, an instructional strategy, a set of instructional skills, a classroom management or counseling technique, or a technological innovation.

***Example***

To determine its staff development content a school staff:

- Collects, organizes, and analyzes data on student performance and other aspects of school functioning.
- Examines the "gaps" or discrepancies found between what the data indicate and what is desired.
- Describes the discrepancies in clear and concise problem statements. (The problem might be with the scope and sequence of the curriculum, instructional materials, teachers' knowledge of academic content, teaching methods, discipline, internal/external support, and/or assessment.)
- Determines possible causes of the discrepancies.
- Specifies the evidence that would indicate the problem has been solved (desired outcomes).
- Identifies possible staff development content that would address the cause(s) of the problem(s).
- Selects the content that: has the greatest potential for addressing the problem and improving student learning; has support through the implementation and institutionalization phases; has strong advocates at the school and district level; and is supported by needed adjustments in the organizational or administrative structure.

***Outcomes***

- Research-based content is used in staff development.
- Data reveal increased student learning.

***Discussion Questions***

- What student outcomes are priorities in this school?
- What staff development content would help achieve these outcomes?
- What questions should be asked as we consider various content?
- What evidence would indicate that these outcomes have been achieved?

NOTES

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## NEXT STEPS

# Integration of Innovations

NOTES

***Rationale***

New programs are often introduced in schools without any effort to show how they relate to the ones that came before or those that may come afterward. Furthermore, there is seldom any mention of how these various innovations contribute to the mission of the organization or to a professional knowledge base. The result is an enormous overload of fragmented, uncoordinated, and ephemeral attempts at change (Fullan and Miles, 1992).

> Effective middle level staff development provides a framework for integrating innovations and relating those innovations to the mission of the organization.

Effective professional development efforts include precise descriptions of how different innovations can be integrated. Each new innovation is presented as part of a coherent framework for improvement. It is only when several strategies are carefully and systematically integrated that substantial improvements become possible. And as Doyle (1992), Sarason (1990), and others emphasize, coordinating programs and combining ideas releases great energy during the improvement process.

In recent years researchers have developed several model frameworks for integrating a school's collection of programs or innovations. One framework developed by Marzano, Pickering, and Brandt (1990) is based on various dimensions of learning. Another developed by Guskey (1990) is built around what are considered to be the five major components in the teaching and learning process. Frameworks such as these allow skilled practitioners to see more clearly the linkages between various innovations. They also offer guidance to the efforts of reformers seeking to pull together programs that collectively address the problems that are most pressing in a school or organization.

***Example***

As part of planning activities, a school's improvement committee analyzes the strengths of several research-based instructional innovations to determine the relationships among them. The committee selects a collection of complementary strategies that relate directly to the school's mission. These strategies are organized in a coherent framework that illustrates their shared purposes in clear and practical ways. When an innovation is introduced to staff members, the committee describes the relationship between the new ideas and other strategies currently in use. Staff members engaged in various implementation activities find ways to coordinate the new practices with other strategies they have found to be successful and then share their results. As implementation efforts continue, data are gathered to determine the effectiveness of each strategy and detect needed refinements.

***Outcomes***

- Improvement plans include a carefully and thoughtfully designed framework for integrating the innovations to be implemented.
- All implementation efforts include descriptions of how each new innovation relates to ongoing programs and to the mission of the organization.
- The framework describes how the selected innovations collectively address school priorities.

***Discussion Questions***

- What collection of research-based innovations best addresses the identified goals in this school?
- What are the relationships among these innovations and how can they be illustrated in ways that make sense to those involved in the improvement process?
- Design a coherent framework to show how these various innovations relate to each other and to the mission of the organization. Can this framework be used to guide current improvement efforts and plan future activities?

NOTES

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NEXT STEPS

# Evaluation of Staff Development

NOTES

***Rationale***

Evaluation of staff development serves two major purposes: to inform the staff about the staff development process, and to determine the effects of that process.

Because these purposes are closely linked, the information gathered for an evaluation may, and often does, serve both. To do so, however, evaluation must be seen as an ongoing process that is initiated in the earliest stages of program planning and continued beyond program completion.

> Effective middle level staff development requires an evaluation process that is ongoing, includes multiple sources of information, and focuses on all levels of the organization.

Staff development programs generally seek to impact a wide range of outcomes and affect many constituencies. For this reason, evaluation information should be drawn from multiple sources and should include both quantitative and qualitative data. The type of data gathered should be determined by the nature of the data source and the goals of the program.

All levels of an organization affect staff development; therefore, all levels should be included in the evaluation of any staff development effort. Although evaluations should be considerate of the time and energy required from participants, evaluation information should include data on participant outcomes, organizational outcomes, and student outcomes. Evaluation information also should be presented in forms easily understood by all interested parties.

***Example***

An analysis of the data from a school's student assessment program reveal that many students are performing poorly on problem-solving tasks. A team of teachers, counselors, and administrators meet to consider: research-based instructional strategies designed to improve students' problem-solving skills, organization structures that may constrain the development of such skills (tracking practices, poor quality instructional materials, limited class time, etc.), and reliable indicators of progress in addressing the problem.

A training program is conducted to familiarize staff members with several strategies and to prepare them for implementation. In addition, information is shared regarding needed organizational changes and steps are taken to enact the changes. Throughout the process data are gathered on staff members' perceptions of the training, knowledge gained, degree of implementation, and effects on students. This information is used to guide revisions in implementation and to document improvements. Finally, student assessment data are monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the steps taken and to plan further improvement initiatives.

***Outcomes***

- Evaluation is considered an integral part of staff development program planning and implementation.
- Evaluation information is gathered and analyzed on an ongoing basis to direct revisions in the planning and implementation process.
- Evaluations are designed to assess a variety of program outcomes, including: (1) participants' reactions to the program, (2) participants' learning, (3) participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and (4) impact on student outcomes.
- Evaluations tap multiple sources of information, consider all levels of the organization, and convey results in forms easily understood by all interested parties.

NOTES

***Discussion Questions***

- What information will provide the best evidence on the attainment of program goals?
- What levels of the organization affect the program and are affected by it? What are the most efficient and most effective means of gathering/analyzing this information?
- Will the evaluation information be useful in making ongoing revisions (formative), in determining the overall effectiveness (summative), or both?

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## NEXT STEPS

# Models of Staff Development

NOTES

***Rationale***

The growth of staff development programs in recent years has resulted from a belief that these programs are necessary to increase student achievement. A growing body of research on the effectiveness of staff development programs has identified the characteristics of productive programs. The characteristics include:

- Connectedness to school settings and to schoolwide efforts;
- Involvement of teachers as planners;
- Providing choice and differentiated learning opportunities;
- Use of demonstration, supervised practice, and feedback as a part of training; and
- Ongoing assistance and support.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT USES A VARIETY OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOALS OF IMPROVING INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS.

Although there are many ways in which educators may learn, training continues to be the dominant model. In many districts, training equals staff development. Recently, descriptions of differentiated models of staff development were provided to demonstrate that there are many ways in addition to training to improve job-related knowledge, skills, or attitudes (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1990). Five models are offered as useful methods for accomplishing the goals of staff development.

- *Individually-guided staff development:* The learner designs learning activities. One of the assumptions of this model is that individuals are motivated by being able to select their own learning goals and means for accomplishing those goals. One belief which undergirds this model is that self-directed development empowers teachers to address their own problems and by doing so, creates a sense of professionalism.
- *Observation/Assessment:* Instructional practices are improved through classroom observation and feedback. Having someone else in the classroom to view instruction and give feedback or provide reflection is a powerful way to impact classroom behavior. This model uses colleagues or other personnel to act as another set of "eyes and ears" for the teacher. Opportunities for analysis and reflection on professional practice are available in this format.
- *Involvement in a Development/Improvement Process:* Systematic school improvement processes typically involve assessing current practices and determining a problem whose solution will improve student outcomes. The solution might include developing curriculum, designing programs, or changing classroom practice. New skills or knowledge may be required which can be accomplished through reading, discussion, observation, training, and experimentation. Consequently, involvement in the improvement process can result in many new skills, attitudes, and behaviors.
- *Training:* A training design includes the selection of objectives, learning activities, and outcomes. Usually the outcomes involve awareness, knowledge, or skill development, but changes in attitude, transfer of training, and "executive control" need to be included as well. The improvement of teachers' thinking should be a critical outcome of any training program. The most effective training programs include exploration of theory, demonstrations of practice, supervised trial of new skills with feedback on performance, and coaching within the workplace.
- *Inquiry:* Teachers formulate questions about their own practice and pursue objective answers to those questions. Inquiry involves the identification of a problem, data collection (from research literature and classroom data), data analysis, and changes in practice with additional data collection. The inquiry can be done individually or in small groups. This model is built on a belief that the mark of a professional teacher is the ability to take "reflective action."

NOTES

Another approach to provide variety in staff development is through the use of technology to allow individuals or small groups to create staff development opportunities to meet their unique needs. For instance, video cameras can be used to promote self-assessment and/or peer coaching. Electronic networking services provide rich databases for educators, and electronic mail can connect teachers and administrators with colleagues as they seek answers to instructional or school improvement questions. Teachers can use staff development videotapes as awareness-building activities or to improve their knowledge and skills. Cable television and teleconferences can be tapped electronically to bring educational experts into the school. Videos and cable programs can even be viewed in the evening in one's home.

***Example***

A middle school decides to eliminate tracking. The teachers know this will require different instructional practices. One teaching team considers the "five models" and decides to conduct action research on how to address the diverse needs of students in a heterogeneous setting. First team members locate research through an electronic data base on the topic of the heterogeneous classroom and descriptions of actual classroom practice. When the team assembles the articles, members divide the readings and share what they read with the rest of the group. The background work identifies that differentiated curriculum and instructional practices will be necessary to meet student needs. The group develops differentiated lessons for the same outcome and tries those lessons in their classrooms. They continue to research other instructional practices which might be useful in the heterogeneous classroom.

***Outcomes***

- Various forms of staff development are used.
- Adults are provided options for achieving staff development outcomes.
- As training is used, it includes theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching.
- Ongoing, job-embedded staff development is a typical activity in the school.

***Discussion Questions***

- What conditions in the school/district would hinder or facilitate the use of these five models?
- Using a current school improvement goal, discuss how each of the five models could be used in its attainment.

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NEXT STEPS

# Follow Up

NOTES

***Rationale***

Too many educators still believe that teacher behavior can be changed with "one-shot" workshops. When efforts cease following training workshops, 90% of the investment in the improvement of instruction is lost (Joyce and Showers, 1988). In fact, Joyce and Showers indicate that it may take up to 20 follow-up and coaching sessions to ensure the successful implementation of a particular teaching strategy.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES THE FOLLOW UP NECESSARY TO ENSURE IMPROVEMENT.

Options for follow up include peer coaching, collegial support groups, mentoring, study groups, and audiotaping or videotaping learners. Follow- up strategies enable teachers to focus on the new skills and their impact on students.

Follow up must be planned and adequately funded. Some experts believe that 50% of the resources set aside for staff development initiatives should be directed at follow up.

*Relationship Between Levels of Impact and Components of Training*

| | Levels of Impact | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Components of Training** | **Concept Understanding** | **Skill Attainment** | **Application/ Problem Solving** |
| Presentation of theory | 85% | 15% | 5-10% |
| Modeling | 85% | 18% | 5-10% |
| Practice and low risk feedback | 85% | 80% | 10-15% |
| Coaching<br>Study teams<br>Peer visits | 90% | 90% | 80-90% |

*Adapted from the research of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers.*

***Example***

A middle school faculty has completed a three-day cooperative learning training program. Two additional days of training are scheduled for three months later. Considerable planning has taken place to ensure all staff members receive the support they need to be successful in their implementation of this practice. The follow-up plan requires all members of the faculty participate and continue their study of cooperative learning through study teams. The plan outlines expectations that each teacher be observed by a member of the study team at least twice before the next training session. Optional follow-up opportunities include videotaping and audiotaping lessons, inviting the principal to observe and provide feedback, participating on an action research team, and revising curriculum.

***Outcomes***

- Desired changes in on-the-job behavior result in improved student performance.
- The ability of staff members to analyze and self-correct their performance improves.
- Teachers use appropriate research-based strategies in their classrooms.

***Discussion Questions***

- What training has been provided in the past few years? Was an adequate amount of follow up provided?
- What follow-up models have been used?
- What other models could be built into the system?

NOTES

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## Next Steps

# Collaborative Skills

NOTES

***Rationale***

All current school restructuring programs have called for a deeper and more meaningful involvement of staff members in decision making. By empowering faculty to make decisions, it is reasoned, teachers will be better able to meet the needs of their students and will have greater ownership of proposed school improvement activities. Decentralization of decision-making authority has been a major focus of most school restructuring efforts. Site-based management, shared governance, and teacher empowerment are all efforts to engage stakeholders (teachers, parents, and students) in the continued development and improvement of the school. Leadership teams, instructional councils, and advisory committees demonstrate this collaborative model, which requires new skills for both teachers and principals.

> Effective middle level staff development requires staff members to learn and apply collaborative skills to conduct meetings, make shared decisions, solve problems, and work collegially.

Making joint decisions with colleagues and administration is a dramatic change for most. Without development of new collaborative strategies and techniques, roles and relationships will remain the same. Unfortunately, participation has been viewed as an end rather than a means for accomplishing better outcomes for students. In addition, teachers and administrators have little in their backgrounds to prepare them for this kind of democratic decision making (Bradley and Olsen, 1993).

Principals and other staff members need training in facilitation skills to ensure productive meetings. Facilitation requires the orchestration of open, honest discussion in a safe and respectful setting. Facilitation includes choosing from a variety of tools and strategies to ensure everyone is actively engaged in making decisions. To accomplish this task, a sense of community must be created so that respectful listening, honoring various perspectives, sharing, trusting, risk taking, and disclosing are consistent behaviors.

Administration and faculty also need training in problem-solving strategies, consensus seeking, conflict management, data analysis, and the evaluation and monitoring of work. Further, the school culture must support active faculty participation.

***Example***

The new principal of a middle school organizes a school improvement council as a vehicle for participatory leadership and decision making. The council meets each month after school and has as its regular members the principal, the assistant principal, department chairs, a guidance counselor, a representative from the special education program, a business partner, two parents from each grade level (elected by parents), and two students from each grade level (elected by students).

Prior to this appointment the principal receives extensive training on collaborative leadership including meeting planning, group processes, consensus building, and conflict resolution. During the first three Council meetings, the principal uses a portion of each session to train committee members in these processes. The principal and the Council also discuss at length those issues over which the Council will have authority. These include developing a school mission statement and goals, approving a school improvement plan, approving expenditures within an identified school improvement budget, and evaluating the school's progress in achieving its mission and goals. A tentative agenda for each meeting is distributed to all Council members and posted on the teachers' bulletin board so that Council members and other staff can suggest items for discussion.

NOTES

***Outcomes***

- The staff owns and is committed to new programs and activities.
- The school council focuses decisions on instruction and student learning.
- A variety of readiness and professional development activities occur at each school site rather than as uniform activities throughout a system.
- Faculty and administration develop the skills to work collaboratively.

***Discussion Questions***

- What is the school's philosophy regarding shared decision making?
- What skills do the principal, staff, parents, students, and others need to work collaboratively?
- How will the effectiveness of a leadership team be evaluated?

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NEXT STEPS

# Group Development

NOTES

***Rationale***

The isolation of one teacher in one classroom is an enduring reality in a majority of schools. Yet, the changes needed in most schools require that teachers work together in the classroom, in preparation of curriculum and learning materials, and in supporting changes in instructional practice.

Effective middle level staff development requires knowledge and use of the stages of group development to build effective, productive, collegial teams.

Learning to work with others does not occur merely by being placed on a team, especially when working alone has been the norm. Training in team building can increase a group's ability to work together more effectively. Group productivity takes time–teams will not become effective overnight. Groups typically go through four phases of development: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965 in Johnson and Johnson, 1982). Groups may spend different amounts of time at each stage and may move through them in different sequences, yet each group will experience each stage. It is helpful for group members to know about this journey and learn skills to facilitate movement to the next stage.

- *Forming:* When groups are first created, there are a number of needs and questions which occur. Group members at this stage may have high expectations and anxiety about where they fit. Members might test the situation and the central figures, yet be dependent on authority to create a structure. The tasks of this stage include providing orientation; creating structure; defining goals, direction, and roles; and defining tasks and needed skills. The issues involved in this stage are inclusion and trust.

- *Storming:* In this stage, groups rebel against each other and against authority. Members may feel disappointed with the discrepancy between hopes and reality and with the dependence on authority. They can feel angry about goals, tasks, and action plans, and may feel incompetent and confused. Group members can also compete for power and attention with other members. The tasks of this stage are to develop skills needed for the actions; refine goals, roles and responsibilities; and learn to work together. The issues involved at this stage are power, control, and conflict.

- *Norming:* If groups have the necessary skills to resolve the issues of the storming stage, they arrive at this stage. At this point, dissatisfaction decreases, and harmony, trust, support, and respect develop. Group members have more confidence and self-esteem, are more open, and provide more feedback. There is a sense of responsibility and control, and operating procedures are established. Here the tasks are to deepen skills and understandings, increase productivity, evaluate critically and constructively, and examine team functioning. The issues involve relinquishing control of the leader, continued confrontation of conflict, and the avoidance of "group think."

- *Performing:* This stage results in a highly productive group and is usually the last stage. Group members work collaboratively and interdependently, show confidence in accomplishing tasks, share leadership responsibilities, and perform at high levels. Tasks include a focus on work completion, dealing immediately and directly with interpersonal/group issues, continuing to deepen knowledge/skills, and making efficient use of time.

***Example***

An exploratory interdisciplinary curriculum is proposed in a "school within a school" framework. Interdisciplinary teams are created so that instructional units will demon-

NOTES

strate connections of key concepts. Team leaders are provided with a training session and reading materials on the stages of group development. Together the team leaders create an agenda for the first meeting of the team which provides an orientation to interdisciplinary teaching and clarifies goals, tasks, and expectations.

The first meeting of the team involves discussion of what interdisciplinary teaching will look like. Group members also talk about what they feel are the most important concepts of the disciplines and what is most important to them about teaching. Time is given for each team to develop its own mission statement which focuses on student outcomes. Each team develops a set of goals and action plans for working together for the year. *(Forming)*

Several months later, the teams review and revise their first interdisciplinary units. Two teachers feel that the movement away from specific discipline-based knowledge is a mistake and argue that there is important information being lost in this new approach. The remainder of the team is silent but feels that the others are being resistant to the new concept. The meeting ends in a stalemate. A member from another team joins the group at the next meeting to help resolve the conflict. After reviewing the mission statement and goals, a problem-solving format is introduced to identify all the benefits and cautions of an interdisciplinary unit design. The team decides that each member needs to create a master list of critical concepts that their students are expected to learn and demonstrate. The team decides to use the concept list in developing units. *( Storming)*

At the end of the year, the team meets to share student results and reactions to the units and their implementation. Based on the reflections and evaluations, the team lists effective components and brainstorms alternative strategies and techniques. A set of guidelines are written for unit development, and work plans, schedules, and timelines for new units are determined. All members feel they can bring up any topic and there will be a respectful discussion of any issue. *(Norming)*

The following year the team starts with another group assessment. Group members express a need to learn how to criticize ideas, not people, and be more deliberate about the process of working together. They ask a central staff member to help them develop these skills. The team debriefs their meetings once a week. By the spring of the second year, the team has established a rhythm to their work so that team meetings are productive while allowing time for celebrating classroom successes and sharing personal anecdotes. *(Performing)*

***Outcomes***

- Highly productive teams practice effective interpersonal skills.
- Attention is paid to the development of group/interpersonal skills, not just to tasks which need to be completed.
- Training and skill development occur to increase trust, communication, and conflict management.
- Groups debrief meetings to increase productivity.

***Discussion Questions***

- What staff members need to know the stages of group development? What are the benefits and cautions of each stage?
- How do individual schools or teams currently deal with conflict? What conditions or behaviors will be necessary so that conflict can be used productively?
- Because teams will take a long time to develop, what could a team do in the next 48 hours to begin to work differently with each other?

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## Next Steps

## NOTES

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Adolescent Development

Classroom Management

Diversity

Curriculum

Research-Based Instructional Strategies

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Family Involvement

Student Performance Assessment

Service Learning

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Interdisciplinary Teams

# Adolescent Development

NOTES

***Rationale***

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's *Turning Points* report (1989) reveals a "volatile mismatch" between the developmental needs of young adolescents and the predominant middle-grades structures and instructional practices. This mismatch often leads to alienation from school and an increased dropout rate in high school.

Effective middle level staff development increases administrators' and teachers' understanding of how to provide school environments and instruction that are responsive to the developmental needs of young adolescents.

Because most teachers currently at the middle level have had no specific preparation for these grades and are certified at the elementary or secondary level, philosophical divisions often exist on the faculty between the elementary- and secondary-trained staff. Effective staff development in early adolescent development is necessary to provide a unified school philosophy based on current knowledge of the unique needs of this age group.

Educators who understand the physical, intellectual, and socio-emotional needs of young adolescents and who have learned how to provide instruction that corresponds to these needs contribute to young adolescents' social and academic achievement. They lose less instructional time dealing with discipline, create school environments that personalize instruction, and provide at least one adult who follows the progress of each young person.

Early adolescence is a time of immense change. Given the varied rate of physical development between youngsters, a middle-grades teacher may see as much as a six-to eight-year physical age span in one classroom. Understanding the physical changes of adolescence is important in helping middle grades adolescents address their concerns about the changes they are experiencing.

Early adolescence is also a time of cognitive change, with some young adolescents moving from concrete to abstract thinking. Instructional strategies should be selected that teach to varied learning styles and the diverse cognitive development of young adolescents. Opportunities to go from concrete experiences, such as experiments or using manipulatives, to the generalization of concepts are important for young adolescents. Explicit teaching of thinking skills and reasoning processes during problem-solving tasks helps to develop students' higher-order thinking skills.

Important socio-emotional developmental tasks for young adolescents included self-definition and forming relationships with their peer group. Young adolescents focus on their peers and on gaining autonomy from their families by forming independent relationships in the community. Both parents and teachers may assume that they no longer need or want adult guidance. This is a dangerous misconception. While young adolescents seek the approval of the peer group for decisions on such issues as clothing, hairstyles, and entertainment, they look to significant adults for guidance on values and for assistance with problem solving.

***Example***

The school improvement committee of a junior high making the transition to a middle school decides that the faculty must increase its knowledge of adolescent development. Committee members research the topic to collect information to share with the faculty. Committee members read articles, view films, and develop the following matrix (next page) to distribute to the staff. They leave the fourth column open to elicit final decisions from the staff.

NOTES

| *Adolescent Characteristic* | *Description* | *Teaching Strategy* | *Recommend* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Intellectual** | Concrete=>Abstract | • Metacognition journals<br>• Manipulatives<br>• Inquiry process<br>• Taba method<br>• Logic games | |
| | Ability to think of future | • Career exploration<br>• What if . . . essays | |
| | Altruism/Idealism | • Community service<br>• Values clarification | |
| | Varied cognition | • Teaching to learning styles<br>• Graphic organizers | |
| **Socio-emotional** | Peer group | • Advisory groups<br>• Cooperative learning | |
| | Self-absorption | • Journal writing<br>• Advisory groups | |
| | Self-definition/ Expression | • Mentors/mentees<br>• Heterogeneous groups<br>• Exploratory clubs<br>• Synectics | |
| | Invulnerability | • Health/risk education | |
| **Physical** | Rapid growth | • Nutrition breaks<br>• Active instruction<br>• Motor skill practice | |
| | Varied attention | • Varied instruction | |
| | Primary/secondary sex characteristics | • Sex education | |

***Outcomes***

- Readiness for school improvement increases as teachers and administrators see the discrepancy between the needs of young adolescents and the school's current practices.
- Teachers and administrators increase their positive view of the age group as they better understand young adolescents and provide education that meets their needs.
- Teachers adopt new programs and instructional strategies that reflect developmentally-appropriate practice.

***Discussion Questions***

- How does the understanding of adolescent development relate to other staff development initiatives in the school?
- How can teachers' increased understanding of adolescent development and increased positive regard for this age group be assessed?
- What may be required to change classroom practice to reflect the developmental needs of young adolescents?

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# Classroom Management

NOTES

***Rationale***

One of a teacher's most important responsibilities is to manage the classroom effectively in order to maximize student learning. The amount of time spent in direct academic instruction is significantly and consistently related to academic achievement. Effective classroom management procedures influence directly the amount of time devoted to instruction and, therefore, positively affect student achievement. Good classroom management does not just happen but exists because effective teachers have a very clear idea of the types of classroom conditions and student behaviors that provide good learning environments. And, it occurs because these teachers work hard to produce such behaviors and conditions (Emmer and Evertson, 1984). Therefore, a key to effective classroom management is good planning. Effective teachers are proactive in their view of classroom management. Rather than establishing a long list of consequences for student misconduct, their efforts focus on management strategies which prevent such misconduct. The most effective classroom managers are distinguished by their success in preventing problems from occurring rather than by the skills necessary for dealing with problems when they occur (Emmer and Evertson, 1984).

> Effective middle level staff development facilitates the development and implementation of school and classroom based management which maximize student learning.

Classroom management has always been a concern of teachers and principals. It is often a determining factor in evaluating teacher effectiveness. Unfortunately, many teacher training programs do not address classroom management in a comprehensive way. Those that do address these issues too often do so in a very narrow way, providing teachers with a "quick fix" "one size fits all" formula. Teachers learn a formula for identifying classroom rules and consequences without considering individual student differences or school philosophy.

A teacher must possess a knowledge of the causative factors of student misconduct and make an effort to recognize the uniqueness of each child and situation. This understanding also requires continuous reflection on the match between instruction and the developmental level of each child. Misbehavior is often a result of disharmony between the two and may occur all along the spectrum of student ability and performance.

***Example***

The teachers and principal of a middle school identify classroom management and school-wide behavior problems as a concern. They recognize that teachers cannot teach effectively and students cannot learn when classrooms are disrupted by inappropriate behavior. Their first step is to request that the School Improvement Team address student behavior as a school improvement priority.

Team members representing all segments of the school community begin collecting data from teachers, students, parents, as well as school records. Team members review current research and visit other schools to observe the success of various school-wide and classroom management strategies. Selected team members also observe teachers recognized as successful classroom managers and meet with them to clarify their observations.

The team formulates a school-wide plan beginning with the development of a mission statement and philosophy which guides them through the rest of the process. The committee chooses to focus on the implementation of peer mediation as a school-wide strategy. The completed plan is presented to the entire staff for input. Suggestions are incorporated into the revised edition which the school then adopts. Evaluation of the new plan is conducted periodically by team members. Overall, teachers rate the program a success.

NOTES

***Outcomes***

- Academic learning time increases.
- A staff development program enhances teachers' repertoire of classroom management techniques.
- Teachers implement effective classroom management approaches.
- Teachers develop the ability to respond to the uniqueness of each child and each situation.
- Students' self esteems are increased by their subsequent success in the classroom.

***Discussion Questions***

- Is classroom management an individual or school need? Is there a school-wide management plan in place? How can it be improved?
- What is the level of knowledge concerning the range of classroom management and discipline strategies available?
- What resources (e.g., time, information, expert assistance) are required to develop a school-wide plan and to assist teachers in developing their own classroom management programs?

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NEXT STEPS

# DIVERSITY

NOTES

***Rationale***

Schools are responsible for helping all students succeed in a global community by providing them with a basic understanding of the diversity that has been a source of this nation's creativity and strength. Diversity in education means adopting an approach that is inclusive and respects and celebrates a variety of perspectives and differences.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT ADDRESSES DIVERSITY BY PROVIDING AWARENESS AND TRAINING RELATED TO THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND BEHAVIORS NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EQUITABLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION IS PROVIDED TO ALL STUDENTS.

In addition, it is important that middle level educators recognize that everyone has contributed to world development and the flow of knowledge and information, and that most human achievements are the result of interactive efforts. Without an understanding of diversity, students remain essentially ignorant of the contributions of a major portion of the world's people. This understanding is thus a fundamental necessity for anyone who wishes to achieve competency in a global society (Asante, 1990).

Banks (1992) argues that diversity in education is not about dividing a united nation, but about uniting a deeply divided nation and giving voice to the voiceless. Others (Comer, 1980 and 1988; Erickson, 1987) stress the cultural differences that exist between children of diverse populations and the mainstream culture. Staff development must provide strategies for teachers to strengthen their own and their students' abilities to recognize, value, and communicate differences.

***Example***

A staff development initiative paves the way for concerned educators to come together to discuss the importance of understanding diversity and its various manifestations in education. The initial meeting led to a series of "Indaba Salons." *Indaba* is a Zulu word meaning intense discussion. The word *salon* is French for drawing room. The term "Indaba Salons" is used to describe a wide range of ways groups can interact in spirited discussions (Salon-keeper's Companion, 1989). The salons take place over a six-month period and focus on exploring issues concerning diversity in education. The salons begin at 4:00 PM and continue until about 8:00 PM. During this time, a facilitator presents a major issue and substantive background information related to diversity and then allows the group of educators to divide into smaller groups for more intense discussion. The process allows participants, through in-depth study and discussion, to define concepts based on the new knowledge they have received. The major outcomes of the salons are the development of a set of principles for reviewing written information in textbooks and curriculum guides and the development of summary guides that document the major salon presentations. Curriculum development to ensure the provision of equitable and quality education for all children follows.

***Outcomes***

- Educators' behaviors reflect an understanding of and respect for diversity in education.
- Effective strategies to engage diverse learners in the instructional process are identified.
- All students show success in learning.

NOTES

***Discussion Questions***

- What is the benefit of developing an increased awareness of diversity?
- What are the academic and non-academic benefits for students when more diverse cultural examples are used in instruction?
- What are our staff development needs with regard to diversity?

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NEXT STEPS

# Curriculum

NOTES

***Rationale***

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) targeted the need to teach a core academic program as one of its eight major recommendations. Even in schools that have made organizational changes such as teaming and advisory programs, the heart of the middle school curriculum often remains untouched. "Shadow studies" of eighth graders document that many middle school students still experience a rote, fragmented curriculum that consists mainly of worksheets.

> Effective middle level staff development enables educators to provide challenging, developmentally appropriate curricula that engage students in integrative ways of thinking and learning.

As Beane (1990) argues, ". . . being sensitive to early adolescent characteristics is only part of 'reform'. The 'how to teach' question must be accompanied by a 'what do we teach and learn' question." The foundation for the core curriculum should be the desired skill and knowledge outcomes for all students in the middle grades. School leaders should determine content and student outcomes with input from students, teachers, parents, and community members, and align these outcomes with district, state, and national content standards.

A comprehensive core curriculum for all students includes language arts and literature, mathematics, physical and social sciences, visual and performing arts, foreign languages, and physical education. The curriculum emphasizes the main concepts and skills of each discipline so that students develop broad background knowledge in each content area and understand the connections between the disciplines.

Young adolescents are preoccupied with the questions such as "Who am I?," "Am I normal?," and "Where is my place in the world?." A developmentally-appropriate integrated curriculum will use themes that relate to young adolescents' desire to create meaning and to find their identity. The curriculum will integrate traditional academic disciplines and help students make connections between academic study and future career options. Service learning and social action projects will provide real-life applications of academic knowledge and skills, as well as offer students meaningful participation and decision-making opportunities.

The diversity of young adolescents' development and their search for self-definition requires a curriculum with varied exploratory options and opportunities for social interaction with peers and adults. Their developing cognitive skills demand a curriculum that teaches problem solving, critical thinking, and inquiry skills. Learning experiences that vary from hands-on to more abstract activities and discussions will correspond to the variety of cognitive levels in a single middle-grades classroom.

Few textbooks and published curricula reflect this standard. Rarer still are published materials that are interdisciplinary in nature. Curriculum-focused staff development will assist teachers in making choices about curriculum content and materials, and provide them with effective frameworks to develop integrated and interdisciplinary curricula.

***Example***

A middle school faculty decides to examine the alignment of its curriculum with the new state curriculum frameworks, which consist of broad concepts and learner outcomes. The faculty wants to increase the use of original source material and multimedia sources to supplement the textbook. The faculty also seeks to cover less material in order to focus more effectively on synthesis and application of the content. In addition, they want to make the curriculum more culturally sensitive to reflect the diversity of their community, and to include student interests in the content covered.

NOTES

A curriculum committee meets and studies some of the key literature related to core curriculum, integrated curricula, and multicultural education. They review the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards. They visit other schools and talk to the faculty about how they made curriculum changes. The committee surveys the teams and departments on the current content they teach and what they believe to be the most essential content. The advisory classes and the subject teachers gather students' perspectives on the topics and skill areas they see as most important. Committee members read national reviews of middle grade curriculum materials.

In a retreat, the school community reviews the curriculum committee's recommendations and decides on the essential skill and knowledge outcomes required of all students. They create a four-year time line for implementation. Teams spend the summer writing curriculum, developing materials, and preparing for the first phase of curriculum alignment. They receive training on the development of integrated curriculum and in providing culturally-sensitive curriculum and instruction. They begin the next year by focusing on essential content areas, supplementing the texts with new source materials, and culminating each four-week unit with a week of student-selected projects and investigations.

***Outcomes***

- Core skills and knowledge that all students will master are identified by the school community.
- Student interest, cultural sensitivity, and relevance to young adolescents are key criteria in curriculum adoption.
- Core skills and knowledge are addressed in an integrated manner based on essential themes and questions.
- Students recognize the connection between the content areas and their real-life concerns.

***Discussion Questions***

- What is the level of staff commitment to the essential characteristics of a middle-level curriculum advocated in this standard?
- What are the sources that impact the school's curriculum outcomes?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum?

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NEXT STEPS

# Research-Based Instructional Strategies

NOTES

***Rationale***

Staff development should enable teachers to appropriately use a variety of approaches to instruction, comprehend underlying instructional theories, and understand relevant research. Many powerful research-based teaching strategies exist to bring about particular kinds of learning and to help students become more effective learners. Educators need to be able to identify these strategies and to select the ones most appropriate for students.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PREPARES TEACHERS TO USE RESEARCH-BASED TEACHING STRATEGIES APPROPRIATE TO THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES AND THEIR STUDENTS.

Teaching strategies (e.g., cooperative learning, constructivism, inquiry, concept attainment) are really learning strategies. As teachers help students acquire information, ideas, skills, values, ways of thinking, and means of expressing themselves, they help them learn. How teaching is conducted has a large impact on students' abilities to educate themselves (Joyce et al., 1993). Student improvement most often occurs when curricula and instructional initiatives become an integrated whole, supporting and complementing each other.

***Example***

A middle school faculty reaches consensus on a whole-school staff development effort that has as its content five teaching and learning strategies that will be implemented across all grade levels and in all curriculum areas. The training takes place continuously over a period of several years. To support high levels of implementation, all faculty members form groups of no more than six. These study groups meet weekly throughout the school years to design lessons, practice teach, study effective teaching methods, and track effects of the strategies on students. The five strategies are:

- Cooperative learning, which organizes students into groups of learners who work together over a wide range of learning tasks to master academic content.
- Inductive teaching, which addresses ways of presenting information to students and teaching them to form categories, build concepts, and organize information.
- Concept attainment, which includes procedures for teaching concepts directly by searching for and listing attributes that can be used to distinguish exemplars from nonexemplars of various categories.
- Mnemonics, which assist students in learning and retaining new information and concepts.
- Synectics, which stimulate creative thinking and problem solving.

***Outcomes***

- Staff development includes instruction in, demonstration of, initial practice with, and follow-up support in using a variety of research-based instructional strategies.
- Within a teaching period, teachers appropriately use more than one research-based teaching strategy.
- The number of students attaining instructional outcomes is increased.

***Discussion Questions***

- What teaching techniques are most often used in this school? What is the research base for these techniques?
- What research-based instructional strategies will help this school reach its objectives for students?

NOTES

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## NEXT STEPS

# High Expectations

NOTES

***Rationale***

Many studies reveal the powerful link between teacher expectations and student performance. Edmonds' research on effective schools (1979) identified a shared faculty belief that all students can learn as one of six correlates related to student achievement. Research has continued to confirm the powerful effects of teacher's differential treatment of students on student performance (Brophy, 1988).

**Effective middle level staff development prepares educators to demonstrate high expectations for student learning.**

Staff development to change beliefs of teachers and administrators is most effective when it presents alternative strategies and behaviors that reflect high expectations. Research-based programs such as Gender and Ethnic Expectations, Student Achievement (GESA), Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA), and the Effective Schools model demonstrate what high expectations look like in the classroom and school. For example, most teachers are unaware of the variability of their patterns of questioning and responding to students based on race and gender. GESA provides a format to observe, record, and alter this pattern through peer coaching. In addition, providing challenging subject matter, such as advanced mathematics for all middle level students, and eliminating permanent assignment to tracked classes also powerfully communicates an administrative commitment to high expectations for student performance. School practices such as awards assemblies that include recognition of students with improved as well as honors performance, and tutoring and mentoring programs that provide student support also demonstrate high expectations.

Adolescence is a time of vulnerability and self-definition for young people in which they begin to envision their future. Teacher attitudes and school policies that reflect low expectations can be particularly devastating to adolescents' future success. Effective staff development should include an audit of current teacher behavior and school practices and how they are perceived by parents and students. Without such an audit, the staff may not perceive that such practices have an adverse impact on students. Peer study of research and visits to other sites where similar populations achieve at a high level can also result in changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs about student capabilities.

***Example***

Parents and community groups confront the staff of a middle level school that has a history of above average scores on state reading and math tests regarding the poor performance of certain groups of 7th and 8th grade students. As the faculty begin to review disaggregated test data, student attendance, discipline referrals, and assignment to high-level courses, they discover a much larger proportion of certain students in low-track classes. These students also have lower attendance and higher suspension rates. A committee formed to close the achievement gap studies the research, visits other schools, and attends conference presentations. All the teachers take part in GESA training and participate in follow-up discussions and study groups.

NOTES

In preparation, the sixth-grade teachers receive training in teaching the gifted and talented and in active instructional strategies. They spend one week planning for the following year. After two years of implementation, the teachers find that the test scores of all students have risen. Based on a presentation of the sixth-grade experience to the faculty, the seventh-grade teachers begin to heterogeneously group all students except for math, and the sixth-grade teachers heterogeneously group all students. Each team and grade level develop a tutoring and support system for those students who need extra assistance, particularly in reading. By the third year, all students are in heterogeneous groups and the school provides elective support classes and after-school tutoring for those who need extra assistance.

***Outcomes***

- Administrators and teachers believe that all students can and will learn at high levels.
- Teachers and administrators have high standards for student performance.
- Teaching performance improves as teachers try strategies that boost student performance.
- Increasing numbers of students experience a challenging core curriculum and improve their achievement.

***Discussion Questions***

- How do teacher beliefs and behaviors affect student performance? What are effective ways to communicate this effect to teachers?
- What school policies communicate high expectations for all students?
- How could a school faculty find out about the expectations it communicates to students and families?

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NEXT STEPS

# Family/Community Involvement

NOTES

***Rationale***

Family involvement results in improved student performance (Epstein, 1987). This is the underlying rationale for forming partnerships between schools and families at the middle level, and it is also the reason for educators to become skilled and knowledgeable about how to increase parents' participation in their children's education. Parents who receive frequent and positive messages from teachers tend to get more involved in their children's education (Ames, 1993). When parents receive information from teachers about classroom learning activities, their child's strengths and progress, and how to help children learn, they are more likely to talk to their children about school, monitor their children's schoolwork, and help their children learn. Fruchter (1992) points out that effective staff development programs demonstrate real commitment to helping all families support their children's success in school and treat families as collaborators rather than clients. Effective programs bridge the gap between school and home by building on the community's values, cultures, and languages and by recognizing that all families have something to contribute to their children's success in school.

> Effective middle level staff development facilitates staff collaboration with and support of families and communities for improving student performance.

Epstein and Connors (1994) developed a six-part typology to help middle schools build strong family, school, and community partnerships: 1) Parenting (help improve parents' understanding of adolescent development, parenting skills, and the conditions at home for learning); 2) School-home communication (improve school-home communication about school programs and student progress); 3) Volunteering (parent and community volunteers involvement in school activities); 4) Learning at home (increasing family involvement in learning activities to be completed outside the classroom); 5) Decision making (involving parents in advisory, decision making, or advocacy roles in a variety of school-based organizations); and 6) Collaborating with community (involving community organizations and institutions that share responsibility for student development and success).

Decker and Decker (1988) identify seven essential components for an effective partnership between schools and families: 1) every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful, and friendly; 2) communication with parents is frequent, clear, and two-way; 3) parents are treated as collaborators in the education process with a strong role to play in their children's learning and behavior; 4) the school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not just those most easily available; 5) the principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families; and 6) the school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community.

The most successful parent involvement programs, as identified by Nicolau and Ramos (1990) had the following elements: an innovative, flexible approach; strong, personal outreach; warm, non-judgmental communication; non-threatening activities; active support by administrators and staff; attention to environment, format, and scheduling; meaningful activities; essentials of child care, transportation, and meals; and high visibility.

Staff development should explicitly recognize families' expertise about their children and show educators what they can learn from families. Although there are distinctive skills needed to work with parents and families, forging connections with families should not be isolated from staff development concerning other central issues such as curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Effective staff development to form school-family partnerships should also result in structural change in the school that creates more opportunities for parents to participate in the school.

NOTES

***Example***

A middle school staff establishes a goal to improve student achievement by increasing family involvement. A subcommittee is formed and disseminates a survey that asks family and community members what kinds of contributions they would like to make to the school and how the school can help them address their concerns regarding the academic progress of their children. Based on feedback the following activities are selected to increase the level and kind of involvement of families.

- Develop a written policy that legitimizes the importance of parent involvement.
- Send home a letter that clearly states the parent involvement goals for the school year.
- Check frequently with a self-evaluation progress report to parents that indicates the events and activities supporting these mutual goals.
- Provide staff training that focuses on communication and collaboration.
- Increase the number of parents and stakeholders on the school improvement team.
- Open a family resource center where family members can check out materials to assist them in better understanding their teenagers and the role they can play in supporting academic performance.
- Conduct a curriculum audit to ensure all types of families are represented.

***Outcomes***

- Student performance and attitude improve.
- School staff and parents/families increase communication about the school's educational goals, classes, and curricula.
- Regular communication occurs between school staff and parents/families about individual student's academic progress and a partnership plan for student progress is created.
- Participation of parents/families in educational activities at school and at home increases.
- Community relations and trust are built in an ongoing problem-preventing way.

***Discussion Questions***

- What skills, knowledge, and attitudes are needed to increase family involvement?
- What barriers to successful parent involvement exist and how can they be eliminated?
- What steps must be taken to facilitate more meaningful connections?
- What are the implications for how the school should reallocate its resources?

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NEXT STEPS

# Student Performance Assessment

NOTES

***Rationale***

Assessment has become a focus of the educational reform agenda. Dissatisfaction with existing standardized testing has contributed to the call for alternative assessment. Whether they are referred to as authentic assessment, portfolio assessment, process testing, exhibits, or demonstrations, the hope is they better capture educational outcomes. They stress the importance of examining processes as well as products of learning. They challenge students to move beyond "one correct answer" and explore multiple possibilities and solutions. They demand teachers articulate instructional goals clearly; align goals, teaching, and learning; and use results to guide instructional decision making (Herman, et al, 1992).

Effective middle level staff development prepares teachers to use various types of performance assessment in their classrooms.

Teachers have used performance assessment throughout all periods of American education. Within each discipline, teachers routinely ask students to write to demonstrate knowledge, make oral presentations, and create projects that require application of knowledge gained and skills acquired/refined as a result of classroom learning experiences. Nonetheless, assessment of student growth and proficiency has primarily occurred through norm-referenced grading systems characterized by competition and rote memorization of isolated facts and figures.

Education in the years ahead will be characterized by student performance assessment. Indeed, since the mid-1980s, more than 40 states have adopted writing samples instead of multiple-choice testing to assess student writing. Currently, some states are working on performance assessments in the humanities, sciences, and arts, as well as the development of a comprehensive student assessment system for students whose first language is not English.

Because large-scale performance assessment is a reality and not a short-term fad, staff development for performance assessment is crucial. Staff development for performance assessment should underscore the real purpose of assessment: supporting learning through good instruction.

***Example***

A school recognizes the need to redefine the way they assess student performance. They are eager to find strategies that assess the strengths and learning of their students. Although the standardized tests demonstrate improved student learning, they are confident other measures would enable them to show not only what students are learning, but how they are able to apply knowledge. They complete an ERIC search on alternative assessment and are overwhelmed by the information available to them. They soon recognize that implementing alternative assessment will be a three-year task. They organize their plan as follows:

- Year 1 - Determine most important questions and assign these tasks to different study groups: organize monthly written or oral reports on findings; select three strategies to pilot next year; and determine staff development needs.
- Year 2 - Pilot strategies and discuss results in study groups. Continue to study additional issues and strategies. Share results of the pilot and determine next steps.
- Year 3 - Repeat the format for Year 2 and begin to implement successful practices.

NOTES

***Outcomes***

- Teachers engage students in tasks that have immediate meaning to their everyday life experiences.
- Students demonstrate knowledge through a range of multidimensional and interdisciplinary tasks that include interviews, observations, portfolios, projects, demonstrations, etc.
- Teachers use various forms of performance assessment to improve instruction and monitor student learning.

***Discussion Questions***

- Is the culture of the school and community receptive to performance assessment?
- What is the relationship of performance assessment to school, district, and state assessment practices?
- What types of performance assessment are currently in use?
- What are the key characteristics of performance assessment?
- What instructional changes must be made in order to conduct effective performance assessment?

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NEXT STEPS

# Service Learning

NOTES

***Rationale***

The Council of Chief State School Officers (1991) identified service learning as an integral part of middle level education and as a way to enhance the total educational experience of adolescents. Service learning is a facet of experiential learning that entails higher-order thinking and problem solving, interdisciplinary learning, relevancy, high levels of motivation, and task engagement. Residual effects for students include higher levels of self-esteem, increased socialization skills, and greater feelings of self-efficacy and empowerment. The individual(s), community, or entity to whom service is rendered also incur lasting benefits.

> Effective middle level staff development prepares educators to combine academic student learning goals with service to the community.

Three principal components are critical to service learning: (1) a thorough preparation of key individuals involved in the service experience, including students, teachers, and community members; (2) service activity that addresses real community issues and/or needs; and (3) guided student reflection on the service experience that relates to academic, social, and personal development. Staff development for effective service learning emphasizes the achievement of both academic and service goals. It must help teachers understand not only the process of service learning, but also how this method of instruction provides ways to apply knowledge to real-world problem solving.

Finally, staff development for service learning distinguishes it from other forms of school-community linkages such as volunteerism or community service. With those approaches, service is stressed, but students' academic gains are viewed as incidental to the process. To be considered service learning, the three components mentioned above must be in operation.

***Example***

Students, teachers, and parents identify the themes of homelessness and hunger for study. Teachers and students plan service activities such as serving a meal at a local shelter, soliciting food donations from local food stores, and preparing collected food for distribution. Activities or tasks by subject area include:

- Language Arts: Students write individual and group letters to obtain the resources needed to do the service activity. Letters to a homeless shelter and to a soup kitchen ask about their specific needs. Students follow up with letters to food stores and other community groups to obtain needed resources.
- Mathematics: Students calculate the average number of people who come to a local shelter for dinner. They estimate how much food is needed to serve a meal, determine what it will cost, and prepare a budget. They create a bar graph of the number of food items collected each day by class and report weekly progress to the entire school. Finally, they compare statistics on hunger in the United States to other countries and to another era.
- Science: Students determine the different kinds and amount of food needed each day for proper nutrition. They discuss the effects of drugs and alcohol on health and poverty. In addition, they learn the importance of plants in feeding and clothing people and keeping them healthy.
- Social Studies: Students discuss people's basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. They investigate the economic factors that have led to increased poverty and homelessness in their community and across the country. They write to federal and state agencies for information on unemployment and housing.

NOTES

As a result of these activities, students develop a variety of employment-related skills such as organizing groups, critical thinking, public speaking, and effective writing.

***Outcomes***

- Service learning addresses both service and academic goals.
- Service learning focuses on real-world problem solving.
- Service learning is a critical component of the school curriculum.

***Discussion Questions***

- What is the role of the school and the teacher in establishing and helping students choose and participate in a service learning opportunity?
- What kind of service learning opportunity is most appropriate for middle level students? Why?
- What types of service learning have been used?
- How can service learning experiences be evaluated?

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NEXT STEPS

# ADVISEMENT/GUIDANCE

NOTES

***Rationale***

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's Turning Points (1989) recommends "...small communities of learning where stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth." The role of teachers as advisors for young adolescents is crucial as they explore the questions of "Who am I?" and "What will I become?" As the Carnegie report further states, "...every student needs at least one thoughtful adult who has the time and takes the trouble to talk with the student about academic matters, personal problems, and the importance of performing well in school." A structured advisor-advisee relationship where one teacher follows the progress and is an advocate for a small group of students is an integral part of a successful middle level program. A teacher-advisor provides the key link between the academic team and students' families.

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT INCREASES ADMINISTRATORS' AND TEACHERS' ABILITY TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND ADVISEMENT TO YOUNG ADOLESCENTS.

Teachers taking on the new role of advisor–whether in small advisory classes or other structures–need opportunities to learn skills related to facilitating small groups, providing ongoing support, and developing mentoring relationships with students. Faculty will need time to review and develop advisory activities and curricula. While curricula for advisor/advisee programs are diverse, most include the topics of peer relationships, self awareness, adolescent development, study and organizational skills, and career and academic planning.

***Example***

A middle school improvement team wants to improve student/teacher relationships and provide academic planning for students. They read the literature on teacher-based guidance and decide to expand their school's guidance program. Spearheaded by the counselors, a planning group of teachers from each grade level visit schools with advisory programs, review advisory curricula, and lead study groups for the faculty on guidance at the middle level level. That summer they plan four days of staff development and curriculum writing for the teams. Each grade level focuses on different issues relevant to adolescents with the themes of peer relationships, school, and career planning.

The next school year, the teams institute advisory classes two times a week. The action committee and counselors meet with the teams every other month to review the curricula and results of the program and to plan for individual student needs.

In addition to the advisory program, the counselors shift their duties from scheduling students to facilitating small groups of students and one-on-one counseling. They also are resources, serving as team leaders, to the teams on the process of advisement.

***Outcomes***

- Increased personalization of the learning environment and learning activities.
- Young adolescents' questions and issues are addressed within the curricula and the school day.
- Plans for support or special help are made before a need becomes a problem.
- Young adolescents are known as a complete individual by at least one adult.
- Open communication is established between student, family, and advisor.
- Each student has an adult in a student advocate role.

NOTES

***Discussion Questions***

- How can effective teacher advisement be built into the middle school program?
- What are the crucial issues for adolescents that should be addressed in the advisory program?
- How does a teacher's expanded role as advisor impact his/her teaching in other classes?
- How do parents become an integral part of an advisor program?
- How does a school systematically collect information about individual advisor/advisees to provide appropriate advisement activities?

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NEXT STEPS

# Interdisciplinary Teams

NOTES

***Rationale***

Interdisciplinary teaming has its historical roots in the core curriculum of the 1930s. The core curriculum was an attempt to break down through curriculum integration the artificial barriers between subjects. It also provided teachers with the opportunity to know their individual students. To accomplish these ends, core curriculum enthusiasts advocated block scheduling and joint planning time for teachers. The focus was on the organization of students and teachers into teams.

**Effective middle level staff development increases staff's knowledge and practice of interdisciplinary team organization and instruction.**

For many years proponents of the middle school concept have called for interdisciplinary team organization and planning in which small groups of teachers of different subjects work together to design and present curriculum for a common group of students. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) recommended team planning as a way to improve the education of middle school students. In addition, team planning is supported by reform initiatives that call for increased participation in decision making by teachers and increased collegiality among teachers. At this time, however, most schools do not use interdisciplinary teams.

Smoothly functioning and cooperative teams do not just happen. They develop as the result of effective staff development experiences that provide time and a context for team members to share experiences with one another, to learn together, and to determine how their strengths can improve instruction.

Flexible scheduling is also essential to the implementation of interdisciplinary team planning. Traditionally, the schedule in junior and senior high schools is characterized by sameness. The order of the classes is the same; the time duration for each of the classes is the same. Flexible scheduling suggests that the order of each day need not be the same. Group size, the order of the periods, and the length of each period can vary. School leaders, however, should not mandate flexible scheduling. Rather, once the opportunity for flexible scheduling is provided, teams must be flexible in planning daily, weekly, or monthly schedules.

***Example***

Recognizing that a strong team is essential for maximum student achievement, a middle school faculty strives diligently to plan and implement units and lessons that are challenging and relevant. The interdisciplinary team consists of a social studies, science/health, mathematics, and language arts teacher. Three times during the year all the school teams are involved in planning and implementing an interdisciplinary unit of study. Other teams meet weekly.

During the weekly meetings before the unit is implemented, teachers on the team must decide on:

- a unit theme;
- how to introduce the unit to all the team classes;
- specific objectives for each subject area;
- specific skills to be developed team-wide;
- supporting activities for each objective;
- materials and resources required for each subject area;
- special projects, field trips, or guest speakers;
- weekly vocabulary development;
- assessment; and
- a culminating activity.

***Outcomes***

- Teamed teachers engage in frequent and in-depth professional discussions.
- Teachers tend to have greater influence over those decisions that most directly affect their teaching.
- Increased teacher involvement in the decision-making processes of the school leads to improved communication.
- Teachers find that working on teams makes teaching more rewarding.

***Discussion Questions***

- How effective is this school in the use of interdisciplinary teams?
- What is the primary goal of the interdisciplinary teams?
- What are the immediate concerns or needs of teams?
- How can team roles and functions be evaluated?

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## Next Steps

# APPENDIX

Self Assessment and Planning Tool

Reviewer Acknowledgment

Technical Assistance

# Self-Assessment: Middle Level Staff Development

Groups can use this self-assessment tool to determine the current state of implementation of the context, process, and content of effective staff development for middle schools. The assessment can be used to reveal strengths as well as areas for improvement. A scoring guide and index follow the standards. Because of the value in obtaining multiple perspectives, the self assessment will be most useful if completed by a group rather than individually. We suggest the following steps:

1. Make copies for group members and have each member complete it alone.
2. Have participants compare their individual scores. It is recommended that group members discuss similarities and differences rather than average scores.
3. Have the group discuss why specific scores were given and ask the group to reach consensus on a score which represents the school's current level of implementation.
4. Prepare an action plan based upon the findings from the assessment.

***Self-Assessment: Middle Level Staff Development***

| | *Strongly Disagree* | *Disagree* | *Somewhat Agree* | *Agree* | *Strongly Agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Context*** | | | | | |
| 1. Staff development is ongoing and job-embedded. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Staff development activities result in changes in classroom practice for most teachers on the staff. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The budget allocation supports ongoing professional development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. There is widespread support for professional development among administration, teachers, parents, school board members, and other influential members of the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Staff development is viewed as an essential component for achieving the purposes of the organization and is valued as an integral part of the strategic plan. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Central administration supports the work necessary to accomplish school improvement goals and provides an adequate budget. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Strategies for facilitating planning and learning during the school day exist. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. A minimum of twenty percent of the work week is devoted to joint learning and work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. The school staff is organized into study groups to learn about the change process and/or about particular innovations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Teachers are observed randomly to determine their use of an innovation and the innovation's effect on students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ***Process*** | | | | | |
| 11. The school's improvement plan addresses important aspects of organizational effectiveness such as decision making, communication, and team functioning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Information about systems thinking and the change process are used in making school improvement decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. The principles of adult learning permeate staff development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. The learning climate of staff development activities is collaborative, informal, and respectful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. All critical phases of the change process (initiation, implementation, and institutionalization) are addressed in the planning and delivery of programs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Process (continued)*** | | | | | |
| 16. Staff and administration are aware of the "implementation dip" (things often get worse before they get better). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Staff development decisions are based on data regarding valued student outcomes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Recognition of a need to seek improvement exists. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Staff reading, study, and discussion of educational innovations precede decisions concerning staff development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Research-based content serves as the core of staff learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Improvement plans include a carefully-designed framework for the integration of innovations being implemented. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. An instructional framework that describes how selected innovations collectively address school priorities exists. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Program evaluation assesses participants' reactions to the program and measures participants' learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. Program evaluation assesses participants' use of new knowledge and skills and the impact on student learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Staff development includes activities other than "training workshops." | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. All staff development training activities include theory, demonstration, practice with feedback, and coaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Desired changes in on-the-job behavior are supported and result in improved student learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Staff members regularly analyze and self-correct performance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Site-base management councils focus primarily on instruction and student learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. Consensus decision making is used to increase staff ownership. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. School teams/groups are models of effective interpersonal and group skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Training and development in collaborative skills occur regularly, especially for new teams or committees. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ***Content*** | | | | | |
| 33. Teachers and administrators are knowledgeable regarding young adolescent development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. Decisions about instruction and new programs are based on how well they reflect developmentally-appropriate practice. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Teachers' classroom management strategies increase academic learning time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. Teachers are familiar with and utilize the research-based findings that support a safe and orderly environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. The school's staff possesses the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to ensure a quality education for all students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. School data confirm that all students have equal access to and participation in the school's programs and activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Students can discuss the connection between the various content areas and their real-life concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. The staff possesses the content knowledge and pedagogy necessary to design and deliver high-quality curriculum. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | *Strongly Disagree* | *Disagree* | *Somewhat Agree* | *Agree* | *Strongly Agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Content (continued)*** | | | | | |
| 41. Teachers use a variety of approaches to teaching, know underlying instructional theories, and understand relevant research. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. There is research to suggest that the content of the school's staff development programs will increase student learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Through the use of a variety of instructional strategies administrators and teachers demonstrate a belief that all students can learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. Teachers use strategies that demonstrate high expectations for all students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. There is regular communication between the school staff and parents/families about individual student's academic progress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. Parent/staff communication focuses on the school's goals, classes, and curriculum with special attention to in-school and community opportunities to enhance student achievement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Student performance assessments include interviews, observations, portfolios, projects, and demonstrations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. Student performance assessments focus on what students can actually do with the knowledge and skills they have acquired. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Adolescents are known as a complete individual by at least one adult. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. Open communication exists between student, family, and advisor. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. Service learning activities are included in the curriculum. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Service learning activities involve a meaningful application of knowledge and/or skills in real-world settings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Teacher teams engage in frequent and in-depth professional discussions about instruction and curriculum practices. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Teachers find working on teams makes teaching more rewarding. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# Scoring Guide for Middle Level Self-Assessment

Compare individual, group, and school-wide scores from the self-assessment for each question.

***Context***

| Score | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Question | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Standard | **Continuous Improvement** | | **Leadership/ Advocacy** | | **Organizational Alignment and Support** | | **Time for Learning** | | **Staff Development as an Innovation** | |

***Process***

| Score | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Question | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Standard | **OD & Systems Thinking** | | **Change Process: Individual** | | **Change Process: Organizational** | | **Data-Driven Decision Making** | | **Selecting Staff Development Content** | |

***Process (continued)***

| Score | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Question | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 31 |
| Standard | **Integration of Innovations** | | **Evaluation of Staff Development** | | **Models of Staff Development** | | **Follow up** | | **Collaborative Skills** | | **Group Development** | |

***Content***

| Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Question | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | | | |
| Standard | **Adolescent Development** | | **Classroom Management** | | **Diversity** | | **Curriculum** | | **Research-Based Instructional Strategies** | | **High Expectations** | | | | |

***Content (continued)***

| Score | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Question | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 |
| Standard | **Family Involvement** | | **Student Performance Assessment** | | **Advisement/ Guidance** | | **Service Learning** | | **Interdisiplinary Teams** | |

Note: Any assessment statement receiving a score of 3 (somewhat agree) or less by a majority of the staff or teams should be considered for improvement.

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The National Staff Development Council wishes to thank the following reviewers of the staff development standards for their time and input on this edition of the standards.

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# Technical Assistance Offer

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